

## **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **STAFF NOTE**

#### **Review Item:**

Kentucky's Assessment and Accountability Program

#### **Applicable Statute or Regulation:**

KRS 158.6453, 703 KAR 5:020.

#### **History/Background:**

***Existing Policy.*** The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) established a state assessment and accountability program with the first assessment administered in spring 1992. Over the years action by the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) and state legislature has modified the assessments and the calculations for accountability; however, the focus has remained primarily a school-based accountability system with high-stakes of recognition and sanctions attached to results. KBE adopted a growth model with performance of schools serving as their own baseline. All students and thus all schools are expected to demonstrate improvement within the system.

The over-riding goal of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) is for all schools in Kentucky to reach Proficiency as defined by the educators and citizens of Kentucky. The accountability system provides the mechanism for measuring this goal and thus provides feedback to schools on how they are progressing toward the long-term goal. Proficiency for a school is described as an Accountability Index of 100 by 2014. The Kentucky Accountability Index measures success in providing quality school programs and increases in student achievement. Every two years this composite index is used to make a performance judgment regarding growth of schools and districts. Schools are classified into one of three performance categories--meets goal, progressing or assistance--that identify them as successful or in need of assistance.

The Kentucky Accountability Index includes both academic content-based and non-academic measures. The academic content measures are based on student performance on custom, criterion-referenced Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) in reading, mathematics, science, social studies, arts and humanities, practical living/vocational studies and writing as well as a nationally norm-referenced test in mathematics and reading. School and district performance in a content area is reflected with an Academic Index that is calculated based on student performance on the Kentucky Core Content Test with reference to Kentucky Performance Standards -- Novice, Apprentice, Proficient and Distinguished. The Academic Index is generated from the percentages of students scoring

at each standard in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, arts and humanities, and practical living and vocational studies, at each tested grade in all Kentucky public schools.

Non-academic measures include attendance rate, retention rate, dropout rate and transition to adult life. Transition to adult life data is collected in the fall of each year via a short survey completed by school personnel. Transitions to adult life include the number of graduates planning to enter the workforce, the military, a college or an alternative vocation.

These multiple measures described above provide a “snapshot” of schools and communicate to schools, parents and the public the importance of each measure and indicator in terms of resources and instructional programs.

Appendix A includes pie charts that display the current components and weighting used to calculate an Accountability Index for elementary, middle and high school.

### **Policy Issue(s):**

With the awarding of new assessment contracts based on KBE priorities and recent legislation, Kentucky is moving forward with modifications and additions to the current assessment components beginning in 2007. New or modified assessment components in 2007 and 2008 will include:

- expansion of testing in reading and mathematics grades 3—8,
- different forms of norm-referenced testing,
- addition of multiple-choice items in on-demand writing at elementary and middle,
- change of grades where practical living/vocational studies and on-demand writing are assessed at elementary and middle,
- addition of readiness examinations at grade 8 and 10,
- requirement of mandatory ACT testing at grade 11 and optional Workkeys assessments during high school beginning in 2008,
- inclusion of a new Individual Learning Plan as a possible non-academic factor, and
- movement toward technology-based assessments.

Staff will consult with advisory and stakeholder groups and bring forward recommendations for changes to the state accountability formula. At the June meeting, staff’s best thinking at this time will be shared on potential changes. The KBE will need to consider how assessment components beginning in 2007 should impact changes to the accountability calculations and amend appropriate regulations that will define new decisions regarding assessment and accountability.

**Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

As Kentucky's assessment and accountability system transitions to incorporate new assessments and changes to the accountability program, an important consideration will be how to build the system while allowing schools and districts the capacity to manage the change. Clear expectations are a key to focusing work toward school and student proficiency.

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Deputy Commissioner

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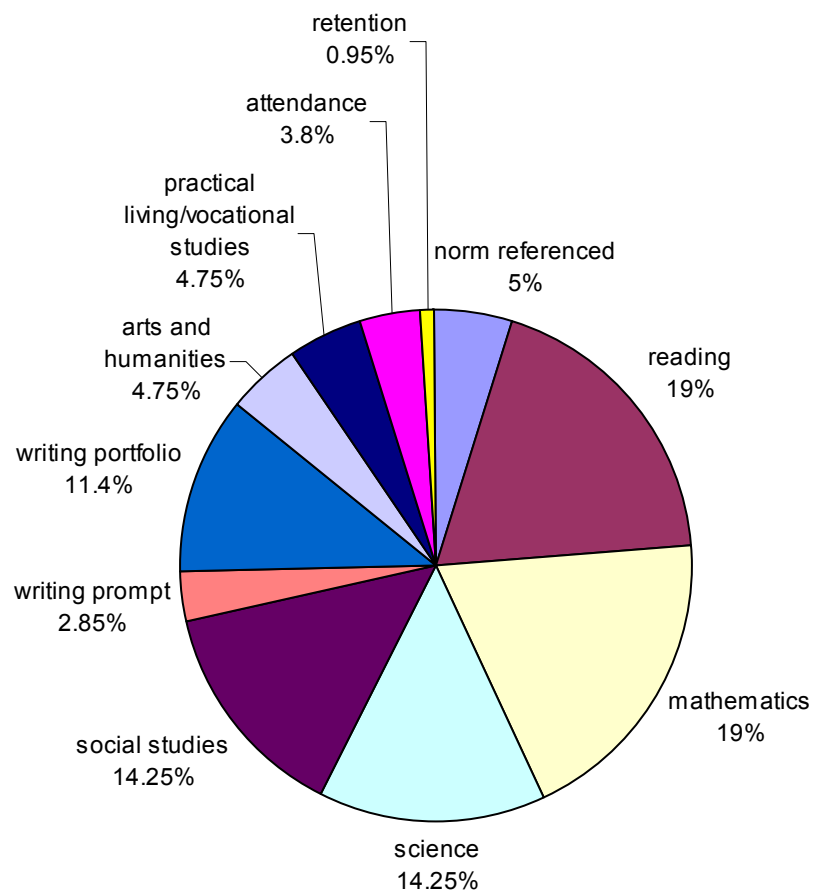
Commissioner of Education

**Date:**

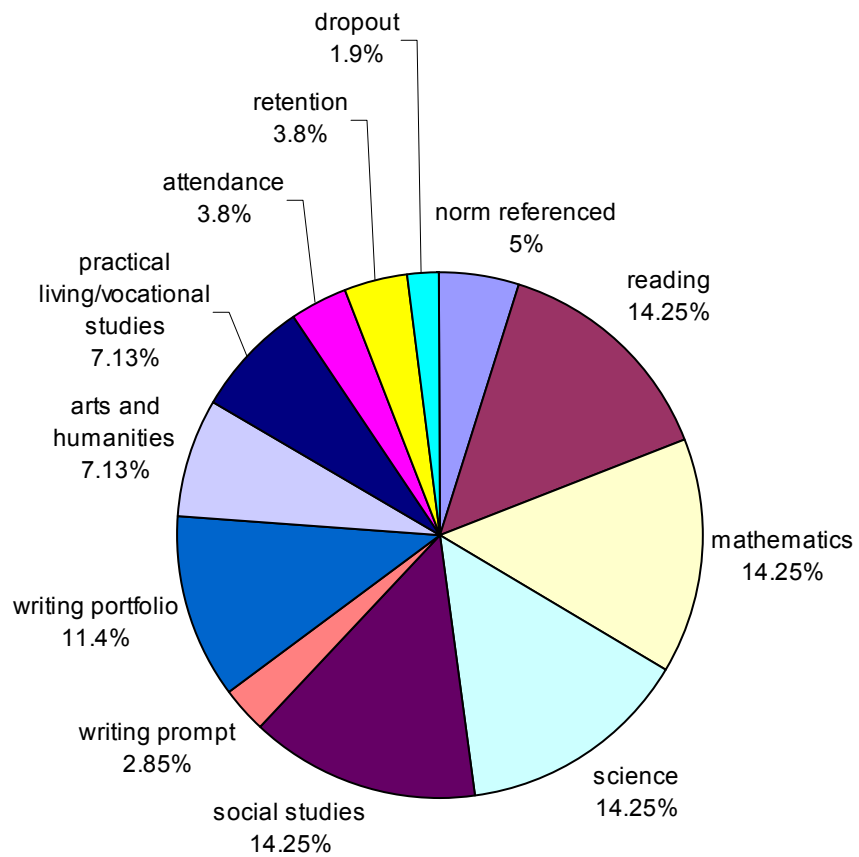
June 2006

## APPENDIX A

### COMMONWEALTH ACCOUNTABILITY TESTING SYSTEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WEIGHTS



COMMONWEALTH ACCOUNTABILITY TESTING SYSTEM  
MIDDLE SCHOOL WEIGHTS



COMMONWEALTH ACCOUNTABILITY TESTING SYSTEM  
HIGH SCHOOL WEIGHTS

